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MAYOR

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SB0627

March 14, 2023

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 627 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Dialysis Services

POSITION: Support

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 627.

SB 627 requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide coverage for dialysis services to certain noncitizen individuals with end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) to receive dialysis at least three times per week. These individuals would otherwise be eligible for dialysis treatments covered by the Maryland Medical Assistance Program if not for their immigration status. Failure to receive dialysis when needed by persons with end-stage renal disease can lead to severe health complications, disabilities, and death.

There currently is no cure for ESKD. Patients with severe kidney disease are typically treated with routine dialysis or kidney transplants. Medicare covers the cost of dialysis for most US citizens who require these treatments. Non-citizens are eligible to donate organs, but nationally are excluded from most government coverage programs and are often not eligible to be organ recipients.¹ Patients who lack access to routine dialysis are almost five times more likely to die (when receiving emergency-only dialysis), have higher rates of emergency room visits, more hospital admissions, and spend more days in the hospital during those admissions.²

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 627. Providing routine dialysis for Maryland's non-citizens with ESKD can result in cost savings for our hospital systems and alleviate care burden within emergency departments. Routine dialysis is also equitable ethical healthcare for ESKD non-citizens who require this life-saving care.

¹ [End Stage Kidney Disease in Non-citizen Patients: Epidemiology, Treatment, and an Update to Policy in Illinois | SpringerLink](#)

² [Improving dialysis for undocumented immigrants with ESRD \(umich.edu\)](#)